what is not told is more securely hidden. The subtlest politicians, like Mr. Baldwin at the time of the abdication of King Edward VIII, put all their cards on the table; and outspoken auto-biographies by burglars, waiters, taxi-drivers, convicts, under-graduates, society ladies, diplomats, journalists, restaurateurs, politicians, down-and-outs, monarchs, all conditions of men and women, turn out to be no more than essays in self-dramatisation.

The burglar is a choice spirit out of the common run of burglars —for instance, Mr. Mark Benny, who has described in *Low Company* how when he was on a job, cultural aspirations impelled him to fill his bag with *objets d'art* rather than with conimon-or-garden silver spoons. A small bust of Beethoven or a Hogarth print was irresistible, even though a fruit salver might be taken. Such a predilection, it may be assumed, is rare among burglars.

In the same way, the waiter devotes his scanty leisure to intel-lectual pursuits; the monarch is never so happy as away from court formalities, and the prostitute imbibes culture from a Bloomsbury clientele.[29] Even Hitler, in *Mein Kampf,* makes the general observation that as a poverty-stricken youth in Vienna he read voraciously, though without specifying what. He, too, though he exalts averageness, is reluctant to admit that his tastes are average ones.

These so diverse autobiographies have in common only the egotism which inspires them, and that is a constant, unvarying at all times and in all circumstances. If Rousseau had happened to be a burglar, his Confessions would have been very like *Low Company,* if an American journalist, very like *The*

Way of the Transgressor: Burglars and prostitutes and queens have always

[29] See *Coming Sir* by Dave Marlow, *My Life* by Queen Marie of Roumania, and *To Beg I am Ashamed* by Sheila Cousins. The last of these was withdrawn from circulation as a result of threatened police court proceedings after an article had appeared in the *Daily Mirror* indignantly denouncing it as an outrage on public morality, and quoting passages regarded as particularly offensive. In view of the great latitude now permitted in describing sexual intimacies, some surprise was occasioned that this particular book should have so offended the *Daily Mirror*. The reason, perhaps, was that Mass Cousins describes her professional experiences without any relish.